

HOW SHALL WE GROW ?

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PLANS AND POLICIES



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PLANS AND POLICIES

1970

Buncombe / Asheville



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HOW SHALL WE GROW?

JULY 1970

**ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE COUNTY
 METROPOLITAN PLANNING BOARD
 P. O. BOX 7148
 Asheville, North Carolina 28807**

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AND BUNCOMBE COUNTY

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The preparation of this report was financially aided through a federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, under the Urban Planning Assistance Program authorized by Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.

A B S T R A C T

Title: How Shall We Grow?

Author: Charles Cunningham, Metropolitan Planner

Subject: Plans and Policies for the Asheville Area

Local Planning Agency: Metropolitan Planning Board of the City of Asheville and Buncombe County.

Source of Copies: Metropolitan Planning Board of the City of Asheville and Buncombe County, P. O. Box 7148, Asheville, N. C. 28807

HUD Project No.: NA

Number of Pages: 32-2 Maps

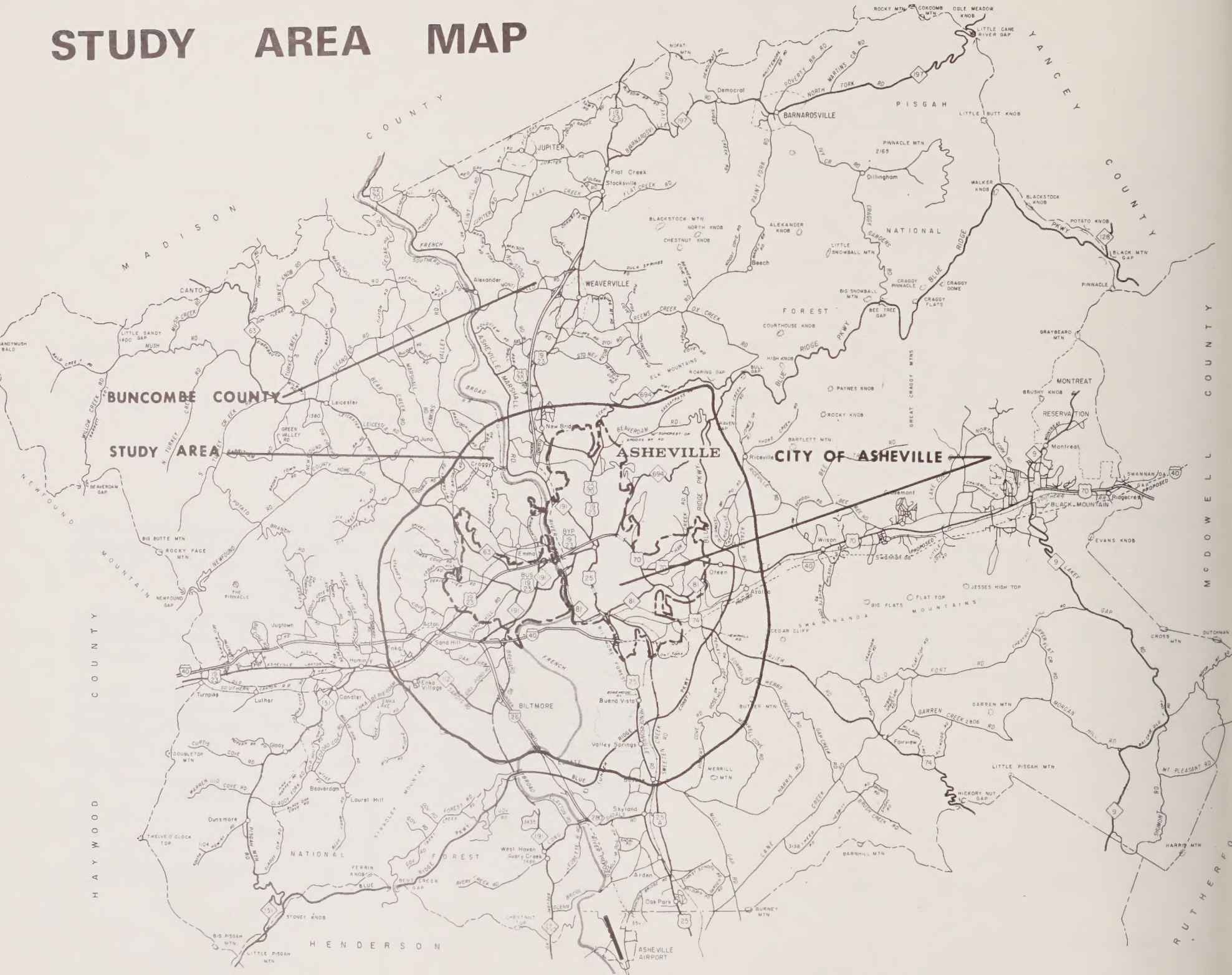
Abstract: This report examines problems connected with the physical growth of the Asheville Urban Area. Emphasis is placed on the use of implementation methods in achieving desirable patterns of land development. Goals and objectives for various functional groupings are stated, including:

The Transportation System	The Central Business District
Housing	Industrial Development
Commercial Development	The Utilities Systems

A major thesis is that the particular problems of the area have been brought about by attempts to scatter land development with minimal development standards, inadequate and undersized utilities and transportation facilities. More compact development is called for with heavy emphasis on governmental coordination and land use controls. The planning function is pictured as being ineffective in the past, with recommendations for integrating planning as a process with the decision making bodies.

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STUDY AREA MAP



Purpose of Report

This is a report for the citizens of the Asheville area. As we begin a new decade many have taken looks ahead to the end of the century with attempts to forecast what will be taking place, together with plans and programs for shaping the future. Planners are optimistic enough to believe that the citizens and their private and public leaders **can** bring about the kind of community they would like to live in.

It has sometimes been said that the area has had a plethora of planning reports and studies with little implementation. Perhaps then this is the time in which we should take a look at how Asheville has grown, what plans have been made, which ones have been valid, and how we can go about either altering the plans or else shifting the manner of focus.

The purpose of this report, therefore, is to examine the major problems and plans for the Asheville area, to discuss the nature of these problems, to establish some fundamental goals and objectives toward which we are striving, and then to determine some procedures, policies, and programs for influencing the changes that will take place in the Asheville area during the next 25 years.

The Planning Program

In all candor it can be said that this area has grown without any particular plan for development. The shape of the landscape has often been influenced more by the laying down of a water line or the building of a highway than by any attempt to coordinate the varied components that go into the building of a community. Asheville did have what was called a City Plan in 1922. It would be of interest to historians to review Mr. John Nolen's Plan at that time and compare it with later developments that took place. For example, one of his recommendations was to establish certain definite and distinct land use patterns in the City and to influence the development of those areas by dividing the City into zoning districts. It is interesting to note that it was 26 years later that Asheville established a Planning and Zoning Commission whose function was to recommend such a zoning ordinance and map for adoption by the City Council. About another 10 years went by before a City-County Planning Board was formed and during its first few years a series of federally-assisted planning studies were prepared.*

The first attempt to prepare a general land use plan was in 1959 and this was considerably updated in 1961 when a comprehensive transportation study was made.

With the establishment July 1, 1969 of a full-time staff for the Metropolitan Planning Board, attention was redirected toward establishing a continuing planning **process**, recognizing the fact that plans are never static and must continually be monitored and constantly under revision. A series of planning studies or what might be considered "inputs" to a "Master Plan" have been under way and are scheduled for continued future activity. Many of these reports will be cited in this document as they have made genuine contributions to the planning process. It is our hope that ways and means can be found for **follow-through** of these reports. With that optimistic note, therefore, the Planning Staff and the Planning Board hope to see continued feedback and day-to-day decisions made in the light of an overall planning process.

A Note About The Area

The "planning area" of the Metropolitan Planning Board is all of Buncombe County. Within these borders, however, the level—or degree—of planning activity varies, ranging from quite detailed analyses and surveys in the more densely built-up sections to rather generalized consideration in the rural and mountainous sections.

Our area of intensive study for the past several years is that portion of the City and the suburban contiguous land which is considered capable of urbanizing within the next 25 years. This is the "Asheville Study Area" for which information has been developed and presented in previous and current reports. This area is shown along with the location of the Asheville city limits, on the map of Buncombe County on the opposite page.

*See Appendix I for Listing of Planning Reports



II. THE TOWN OF ASHEVILLE AND HOW IT GREW

The Early Years

The cross-roads of the Indians and the white settlers in the Western North Carolina mountains in the late 18th century became a place to barter and trade and developed into the small village of Morristown, later to be re-named Asheville. Located on a plateau at the intersection of the Swannanoa and French Broad Rivers, the small settlement became a thriving trading post and a resort area for the low land plantation owners in the hot summer months.

More important to the growth of Asheville than its charter in 1883 was the coming of the railroad in 1880. Rail access was Asheville's greatest economic generator of the 19th Century. The orientation of life in the new city took a rapid change towards the railroad lines. These new lines reached Asheville via the main valleys of access from the east and south. Along these river valleys the water powered and oriented industries began to take advantage of the location factors of power and transportation. The earliest of these were the tannery and cotton mills. The population rose from 2,616 in 1880 to 10,235 in 1890. With advertising from the railroad, the summer and winter resorts of Western North Carolina grew to national renown.

Rail service grew and more hotels and boarding facilities were established. Supporting commercial services grew in proportion, and the fame of Asheville's climate, health, and beauty grew to national and international acclaim. George Vanderbilt had purchased a large tract of land and began construction of his country home in Biltmore, furnishing a payroll of \$12,000 a week for Ashevilleans.

However, in 1894 and 1895 a detrimental real estate boom, sparked by over-speculation, hindered the healthy growth of Asheville for a brief period of time. With the return to normality, Asheville continued growing in the direction predicted in the mid 1880's.

The New Century

Asheville, after the turn of the century, experienced a steady increase of population and construction, based on tourism and trades related to health.

Asheville was unique in that people from the North and South wanted to spend their vacations both during summer and winter in the Asheville Plateau. This was a rarity for a location in the South.

Asheville spared little in advertising the climate, conditions conducive for excellent health and unmatched scenic beauty of the area. The leading industry was centered about the 15 hotels and inns, and the numerous boarding houses. The Battery Park and the Kenilworth Inn Hotels were world famous. The mansion and estate of George Vanderbilt was, and is now, a leading attraction and selling point for Asheville. At this time, if one were lucky, he could receive one of the 50 daily passes from the Vanderbilts to tour the estate.

The town advertised a rapid transit system via electric street cars, from Pack Square to all parts of town, including the railroad depot, both Overlook and Riverside Parks, the suburbs of Victoria, Montford, Kenilworth, and the nearby town of Weaverville.

Private and public schools were considered a great asset in attracting boarders as well as permanent residents to the land of health, wealth, and beauty.

A new City Auditorium had been completed with expanded capacity, offering greater space for conventions. Many paved roads, a new water system, and a new passenger depot under construction were all a part of Asheville entering the 20th Century.





Recreation was paramount, and the drives, horseback riding, walks, and street car routes to the parks were the most popular pastime for the local and vacationing population.

The early core of the Central Business District was highly concentrated along the North and South extensions of Main, Patton Avenue, from the Square to Pritchard Park, and along Haywood Street. The close compact nature of the early CBD resulted from the economic advantage of commercial activities concentrating in an area accessible by foot, horse, and street car. Although the central commercial and business district was rather unimaginative, most of the commercial areas were relatively new and deterioration was almost unknown.

The chief manufacturing employers were the cotton mill, tannery, ice factories, woodworking

establishments, and other small factories located along the river—a general pattern followed in those times because the industrial sites were limited to the River Valleys which supplied the power, water supply, and access to rail transport.

Residential neighborhoods surrounded the business district with wide frontages and large lots, and frequently adjoined fields and gardens. Most of the residential areas were composed of large multi-story houses of creative design and beauty, many of which were the summer and winter resort homes of transient Ashevilleians.

However, associated with some of the more exclusive residential areas were pockets of black residential areas, which supplied the Montford area, South French Broad area, and many of the City's resort facilities with servants and janitorial labor.

These areas of black neighborhoods usually consisted of structures which were of substandard construction when built, crowded, lacked adequate access and rarely had adequate sanitary and water facilities. Thus, core areas of slums were constructed to keep the blacks in one area, close to their place of employment, at the lowest possible cost. Many of Asheville's slums did not just happen, they were constructed for a purpose.

Outwardly, Asheville was thriving and growing on the affluence of summer and winter vacationers attracted by the healthful conditions, beauty, and comfort of a year-round resort. Yet, the urban core was being sewn with spots of blight which, through poor planning, segregation, and neglect would later converge on the entire center of the town.

1917: City Annexes West Asheville

In 1917, Asheville showed its greatest flair for growth and expansion. The greatest corporate limits expansion in the history of Asheville resulted in the annexation of West Asheville, drawing the two sister cities under one municipality. This annexation was the second major expansion, following a lesser expansion of the original limits to the north and south in 1910.

The automobile had come into its own and had begun to change the country, with more and more orientation towards automotive transportation. More concrete roads had been laid, making possible faster speeds and longer travel. Asheville had thirty-six miles of paved roads and was keeping pace with the nations' leading cities in transportation expansion.

The tourist industry had received a great boost from the construction of the Grove Park Inn in 1913. This was probably the finest inn in the world at that time, and joined Asheville's 18 other fine hotels and inns. The Grove Park Inn dedication was made by William Jennings Bryan and the Inn was frequented by famous national and international personalities.

To supplement the tourist trade, and to take advantage of the climate, resources and cheap labor, industries were locating in Asheville in increasing numbers. The National Casket Company, Hans Rees Sons Tannery, more cotton mills, wood-related industries and others had chosen to locate in Asheville, specifically in the French Broad River basin. The locational factors of these types of industries were similar to industries throughout the South, in that they depended upon raw materials native to the area, cheap unorganized labor, and the availability of water and water power. Industry thus became associated with the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers.

Chaos had come with the great flood of 1916 disrupting life and industry along the rivers for a period of time. Despite setbacks, Asheville continued to grow, adding approximately 1,000 persons per year, reaching an estimated population of 26,000 by 1917. A major factor influencing this growth was the annexation of the incorporated town of West Asheville.

Asheville appealed to tourists and potential residents with many of the same factors as were used in earlier periods; health: attributed to clean, dry air, pure water, and a low tubercular death rate; unmatched scenic beauty and points of interest; and favorable living conditions including municipal services unsurpassed by any other city of its size.

1926 : A Boom Town

1926 saw Asheville amid the greatest period of growth ever experienced in the city's history. During the mid-twenties Asheville reached a climactic peak with the land boom of 1926. The power of the ensuing collapse was not fully felt until the major crash of September, 1929.

During the 10 year period of the twenties, Asheville's population grew from 28,504 in 1920 to 50,193 in 1930, most of this growth coming in the latter half of the twenties. In the mid-twenties, centering on 1926, great strides were made in development of civic interest. Four new schools were completed, with many additions to existing facilities; and a bond was approved for the construction of a new high school. Pack Library, a new city market building housing the market, fire and police departments, and the city garage on Valley Street were all constructed. Land for an additional city park was purchased between Hominy Creek and the French Broad River, and construction of the new City Building had begun. Street extensions on Hilliard

and McDowell had been completed, and the new Bee Tree Reservoir finished. Plans were also under way for the joint city-county Beaucatcher Tunnel. These and many other improvements to the city had been finished or at least begun by 1926.

The obvious display of rapid growth in population and the physical city was already manifesting itself in traffic problems as early as the mid-twenties. The city plan, written by John Nolen in 1922, and adopted in 1924, had offered many solutions to problems of the twenties and beyond, relating to land use controls, transportation planning, and policies governing development of the social and physical environment of the Asheville community.

Some of the Nolen plans for an improved transportation system and an increase in civic, educational, and recreational facilities for the present needs were undertaken, yet many of the long-range proposals for zoning and subdivision controls, water and sewer extension policies, increased taxation, and the employment of a workable, enforceable planning process were never incorporated or enforced in time to save Asheville from the resulting chaos of today.

Asheville's first chance to grow and prosper in the present and future in a planned and orderly fashion was lost during the twenties. The money, initiative, and plans were available for about ten years, but the get-rich-quick mentality, and crisis-reaction planning, set Asheville up for the biggest crash and fall, September, 1929.

1926, isolated from its potentials and shortcomings, was the blossoming of recent prosperity, and yet the beginning of a long drought in which the flower would soon wither and lie dormant for many years.



1948: Return to Normalcy

With the close of World War II, and the return to an emphasis on civilian life, Asheville still found itself in a depressed state. In twenty years the population had grown by only several thousand. Unemployment, resulting from the rapid decline in tourist trade after the 1929 crash, was responsible for the out-flow of many people from the region. Relatively little construction was undertaken, and few improvements to existing utilities and streets had been made during the preceding nineteen years.

Aware of the deteriorating urban core, the City Council in an attempt to prevent further land abuse adopted a zoning ordinance. Although John Nolen had called for such a zoning ordinance in the 1922 plan, it wasn't adopted until 1948. However, the ordinance (of which a revised version is still in use today) was adopted to meet the existing land use of 1948. This action had the effect of promoting continued abuse of the land by following the existing haphazard residential, commercial and industrial growth, regardless of planning.

The effects of the lean years were showing: Asheville had fewer fine hotels and a decreasing number of local tourist attractions; the healthful atmosphere had grown increasingly foul with local and regional air pollution; the once beautiful river valleys of the Swannanoa and French Broad were now open sewers and trash depositories. No longer could Asheville boast of up-to-date roads, clean air, the purest waters — these belong to Asheville of the past.

However, with the increased flow of Federal and State money into the region, and the growing interest

in revitalizing the area, Asheville was to begin its long drive toward a renewed prosperity. In the next few years, urban renewal and public housing would be introduced, reflecting the growing national awareness of disadvantaged minorities and urban blight. Although many aspects of urban life were to grow worse before getting better, 1948 was a starting point in the revival of Asheville.

1960: Only Ten Years Ago

Major improvements and changes were a part of the Asheville of 1960. Increasing emphasis was being placed on the improvement of the deteriorating environment of the city.

For the first time since 1917, Asheville made a major extension of its corporate limits. The only other attempt during these interim years was made in 1929 but was revoked in 1935. The annexation included most of what is known as east Asheville and large extensions of north, south, and west Asheville. With this new increase in total land area, the population grew from 53,000 in 1950 to 60,192 in 1960, an increase due entirely to the city's physical extension.

The new crosstown expressway was about five years old and was undergoing revision even as it is today. Other major transportation plans were being made to bring two interstate highways and the Appalachian Highway into the Asheville thoroughfare system in the next decade. However, most in-town traffic was being subjected to an increase in chaotic tie-ups, due to poor traffic management and lack of any in-town improvements to existing main arteries.

The new sewer treatment plant and major truck lines were only a year old in 1960 and had had little

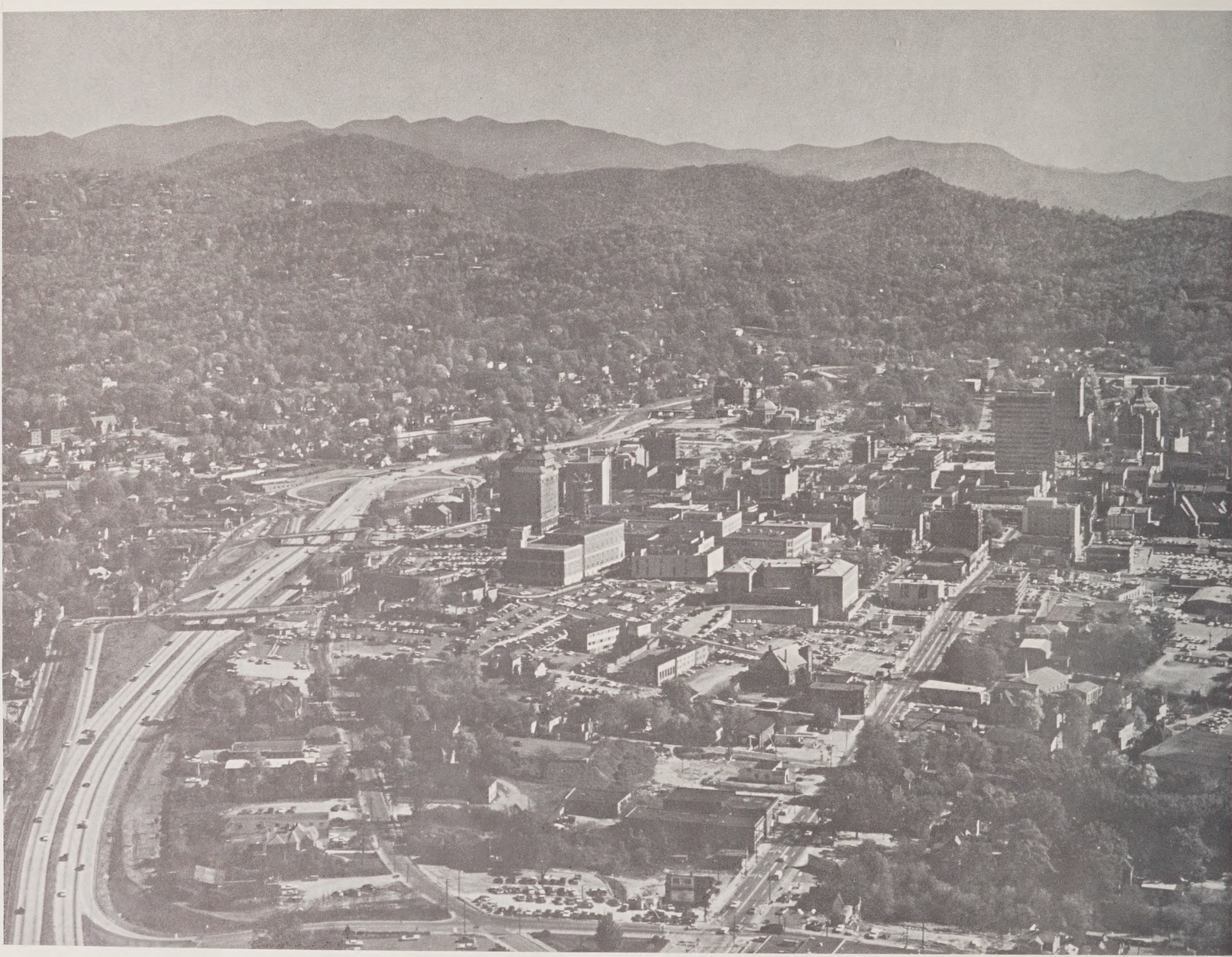
effect as yet in cleaning up the Swannanoa and French Broad Rivers, now subject to the worst state of pollution in their history. Until 1959, all sewage from Asheville and surrounding areas had been poured or pumped into the rivers.

An effort to control land development was introduced in 1959 with the adoption of a subdivision ordinance. Unfortunately it was to suffer much the same impotence as the zoning ordinance of 1948. Few, if any, new concepts were introduced, and many of the intended regulations were to be ignored or side-stepped during the sixties. For some developers, the regulations of the subdivision ordinance were never enforced and the entire process of subdivision planning was forgotten or ignored.

As in 1948, the spirit of improvement was present in 1960 and in many respects stronger than in 1948. However, the instruments to carry out improvement and change were not being enforced or were entirely ignored.

While the shift from an emphasis on tourism to an emphasis on industry was being undertaken for several decades, the 1960's would intensify this goal by offering an atmosphere of good transportation and cheap labor. Tourism was not dead but was taking on a new look in the Asheville area. Tunnel Road was becoming the center for the automotive tourist who would stay overnight in the Asheville area and travel to points of interest elsewhere in the Western North Carolina mountains.

Asheville was again beginning to accelerate, but where and how would the acceleration of 1960 occur?



What has happened to that lovely unspoiled landscape described as early Asheville? Have we developed into the kind of community we've wanted? If not, what has gone wrong? And in what specific ways? Let's take a closer look at the Asheville Area today—its particular problems, its progress, and see if there's a chance of reshaping the city of today into what we'd like to see tomorrow. A map showing the present City appears in the back of this book.

That charming area which was Asheville 1886 today contains the worst buildings and housing conditions in the entire city. The Central Business District is seen as shoddy and run-down. The surrounding areas circling the Central Business District* are in need of wholesale rehabilitation or replacement.

Commercial development has spread to outlying areas, and has followed a wasteful, uneconomic and unattractive "string-bean" type of development, encouraged in no small part by the provisions of a lax and ineffective zoning ordinance.

Considering the critical shortage of good buildable land, there has been serious waste and misuse. Subdivisions have been poorly designed, leaving odd and useless parcels of land growing up in weeds or the repositories for garbage and junk. Streets have been laid out with little regard for their conformance to an overall street system.

Although not a large city, we have compounded our traffic problems by failing to plan for complementary land uses in cluster developments. Thus in order to carry out our daily routine, our citizens must make numerous trips to other parts of the city.

A ride around the city on the local streets and into the suburbs will convince one that we have neglected our own physical plant and instead have spread farther into the hinterland. The same is true of our utility systems. Water lines laid down in the past were not planned for future growth, but only for the immediate problem. Lines of inadequate size and pressure are the rule. The sewer system likewise is over-taxed and in need of drastic overhaul.

*This area now designated as The "Model Cities" area.

The People and the Economy

Today the city of Asheville and the surrounding study area comprise a population of about 78,000. The City is regarded in many ways as a major business, financial, and governmental service center for Western North Carolina. Whereas in the old days most of the people lived in the areas immediately surrounding the central part of town and came "downtown" to do their shopping and carry on their other business affairs, this picture is rapidly changing. People are shopping closer to home for convenience goods and business establishments are losing trade to the outlying parts of the county. The trend was reported in the recent Planning Board report on Population and Economy. Covering the period 1954-63, the city of Asheville's retail sales gained 51.3%, while sales for the area of the county beyond the city limits gained 119.2%, showing the growing decentralization of retail activities. Another trend is the failure of the city to provide sufficient recreation and amusements for the lucrative tourist trade, as well as its own citizens. This is revealed in the actual declines that took place in receipts as well as employment in Amusements, Recreation, and Motion Pictures.

Another significant trend is the growing decentralization of industry in the area. While the early industries established themselves along the railroad line and the river, decreasing dependence on rail for many types of new industries, plus the desire to have larger tracts of land on which are located single-floor plants—all have contributed to the scattering of industry outside the city itself, and in many separate parts of the county.



Transportation System

The street and highway needs were carefully analyzed and plans thoroughly presented in a major thoroughfare plan adopted by the city in 1961. Since that time, a continuing working committee has been established to bring this plan up to date, to include all systems of transportation, and to continually monitor changes as they occur with the view of keeping a transportation plan constantly current.

The street system of the city today, however, falls far short of serving a community of this size which continually advertises for and attracts out-of-town tourists. For the most part, minor streets are narrow and in need of paving with poor horizontal and vertical sight distances. The major streets are in somewhat better condition from the standpoint of sight distances, but they are too narrow to carry traffic demands efficiently.

Difficulty is encountered in maneuvering in the downtown area. This is because of certain one-way patterns and the lack of a grid system. There are only two sets of streets capable of carrying traffic north and south and Patton-College (one-way pairs) carrying traffic east and west. Turning lanes are improperly used, lane marking is ineffective, traffic signals need timing for proper progress, parking needs to be removed in order to make more lanes available to carry traffic, short jogs in the streets need to be removed in order to allow more through movement in the CBD areas, buses need to be more restricted as

to what side of signalized intersections they stop on, loading and unloading of passengers and goods need to be controlled more forcefully and in the way that will benefit movement of traffic, and some sort of loop needs to be provided around the exterior of the Central Business District.

Once a vehicle gets outside the Central Business District, the going is not much better, Patton Avenue (30-44,000 Average Daily Traffic) does provide six-lane access to the west, but to the north Merrimon Avenue with some 3-lane and 4-lane sections (11-18,000 ADT) is inadequate; to the south Biltmore Avenue (15,000 ADT) only provides 3-lane and in some places 4-lane movement of traffic which is stalled at times up to 10 minutes by a grade railroad crossing (Southern Railroad,) and US 25A (McDowell Street) carries 15,000 ADT on 4-narrow lanes that will always be restricted to a 38' viaduct over the Southern Railroad, and to the east 30,000 ADT is fed through a two-lane tunnel. In most sections these major streets carry all the traffic travelling in those corridors and there are no parallel streets to take the burden off the major streets. There are no peripheral loops and because of the terrain it is impossible to provide such a loop in the north-east quadrant. However, some people do use the Blue Ridge Parkway from east to south and I-40 from south to west although that was not the intent of the construction of these two facilities.

The construction of the Appalachian expressway will take some of the traffic burden off Merrimon

Avenue and when the Tunnel Connector Expressway becomes a reality, it will take some of the burden off Tunnel Road. We are indeed fortunate to have I-40 and I-26 intersecting near Asheville and when the missing link between Biltmore Avenue and Azalea is finished, this will also relieve traffic on Tunnel Road and the Cross-Town Expressway.

Asheville's need for controlled access facilities will probably be satisfied for the time being when the construction presently underway and planned is finished. However, the city is in grave need of suitable 2-lane and 4-lane major streets to handle the traffic that will be generated from the express system. The planning for the next decade should be concentrated in this direction. Also, we should concentrate on upgrading the street and traffic conditions in the CBD and urbanized areas.

The mass transit system for the Asheville Area continues to suffer from decreasing patronage. The inconveniences suffered in attempting to use the system fortunately have been recognized, and mass transit is included in the overall study of the transportation system. Possibilities of consolidation of some of the private bus systems will be investigated. It is anticipated that federal subsidies in one form or another will provide the means by which large areas in the city—notably the Model Cities area—might be provided with special bus services to provide residents with home-to-work transportation with no time-consuming transfers.

Housing

By far the great majority of our people live in single family dwelling units. Our recent analysis of residential land use calculated 95% as single family. In fact, land devoted to this one use constituted over half of all developed land in the area. Furthermore, as new land areas are developed, they are for the most part restricted to one dwelling unit per lot.

The areas developed for single-family residences in the recent past are much more pleasant places to live in than most of the rest of the community. This is because many sections are going through a period of transition, and the process is painful. Commercial encroachments impair the quality of the environment, and continued erosion of residential zones is taking place through amendments to the Zoning Map. Severe problems in many neighborhoods of the city have been previously detailed in the Neighborhood Analysis. The major problems are:

- Poor protection (buffering) of residential areas from adjacent commercial areas.

- Poorly designed residential streets with inadequate curves, intersections, pavement widths, etc.

- Intermixture of good and bad structural conditions.

- Housing located on land subject to flooding.

- Poorly designed trailer parks with inadequate buffering.

In the study of residential neighborhoods, it has been frequently observed that many areas become gradually run-down in the absence of any concerted effort or plan to stop blight and deteriorating conditions. It was suggested that there was need to develop a spirit of cooperation and a frame-work for action through neighborhood development associations. If such groups could actively participate in planning their area, they could enlist the cooperation of city department heads and planning staff, and could achieve a measure of improvement in their environment. This need still exists, but it is doubtful that such groups can be formed until more action is taken on the part of the planning board and the city.

But the most distressing part of the housing picture in Asheville today is the high percentage of families living in run-down and dilapidated structures. In the city itself it is estimated that around 6,000 families, or roughly 25% of the entire population, live in deteriorating or dilapidated dwelling units. Substandard living is a way of life for many of our citizens for poor housing conditions are accompanied by poor environmental conditions. The ones in the worst housing are served by the poorest street system, often surrounded by junk and garbage. High density and poor park and recreation facilities add to a generally depressing atmosphere, and often create a feeling of hopelessness—as well as helplessness.

Another severe problem in housing concerns the existence of the three large, high-density barracks-type public housing projects. The mistakes of the past, it is said, will not be repeated in the future, and public housing now under construction has been more carefully planned in a pleasant environment. The Hillcrest Project, isolated on an island surrounded by a cliff and a system of encircling highways, presents a formidable problem difficult of solution. Here the matter of social costs should enter the picture. It has been suggested that the entire project should be abandoned and the buildings converted to other uses. Another suggestion is that the buildings be razed and the site used for a high-rise motor inn. If we can ever get to the point where we begin to catch up a little with our housing needs, serious consideration should be given to removing this ghetto eyesore from the community.

Commercial Development

"Commerce" so often has been the major factor in the location and development of a city. From olden days when merchants established the "bazaars" in the center of activity, traders have come together to maximize the number of contacts and opportunities for barter and exchange.

The establishment and growth of Asheville came about in a manner similar to many other communities. Due to a crossing of transportation lines, it was a convenient place for Indians and traders to get together—to engage in "commerce." Continued development of commercial functions has always been based on the premise that a clustering of complementary—even competitive—businesses presents a greater drawing power (or attraction to the consumer) than a series of isolated businesses. The 50's and 60's have seen the rejection of this concept by large numbers of private entrepreneurs with devastating effects on the landscape. The so-called convenience of the automobile has caused a "string-bean" type of commercial development, whereby each business attempts to operate singly, with its own entrance and exit, its own parking lot, and its own collection of neon flashing advertising signs, each trying to outdo the other.

Among major problems are:

Excess number of curb cuts, coupled with excess widths of driveways.

Inadequate off-street parking and loading space.

Failure to properly plan internal circulation in shopping areas, and separation of pedestrian and automobile traffic.

Unplanned and scattered commercial development leading to waste of land and, in many places, excess land taken up in parking which could have been better combined with other complementary functions in planned shopping developments.

The construction of commercial buildings along major streets and highways, without due regard for adequate setbacks and access controls, has created severe problems of congestion, and has greatly reduced the traffic-carrying capacity of vital arteries.

The general appearance of these scattered commercial areas also leaves much to be desired. The rear of the commercial establishments are cluttered with trash, wrecked automobiles and abandoned equipment, and little effort is made to screen these unsightly conditions from adjoining residences. Inadequate sign regulations have caused many businesses to compete for attention by constructing larger signs than their neighbors, or by cluttering the premises with smaller signs. The resulting jungle of signs in many cases makes it difficult for the passing motorist to visually isolate the sign of the establishment he is seeking. (Or even to see the traffic signals!)

It is obvious that these undesirable types of commercial developments seem to be here to stay. If they cause undue congestion and residential blight, and if they are unsightly, it is because public policies, as expressed in the zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations and other codes, are inadequate.

The Special Problem of The Central Business District

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The center of the city—that portion which above all else gives the city character, vitality, and helps create its image—has long suffered from neglect. Its problems have been analyzed and discussed in somewhat general terms, but no particular plan of re-development has been forthcoming. Granted that a strong healthy retail core is needed, the trends presently in operation indicate the Central Business District must be considered as in a state of transition, and its future carefully planned.

The recent Commercial Areas study detailed the problems of the Central Business District, and made a number of suggestions and recommendations. Some of the findings restate the changing role of this area. For example, in 1954 more than 75% of all primary retail floor space in the metropolitan area was located in the Asheville CBD, at the time of this survey the proportion was down to 40.2%. Only 24% of the buildings were rated as being in standard condition, 43% having minor deficiencies and 33% major deficiencies.

The lack of major recreation and cultural attractions downtown have been pointed out. Suggestions have been made for a specific program of action based on careful, detailed plans. Today more than ever, with continued threats to the vitality of the CBD, and with some of the major retail magnets moving out, the problems of the CBD will get worse until dramatic plans and programs are developed.

Industrial Development

In the Asheville study area, most of industry is located near the railroad track and the rivers. For those plants which need rail service, the limitations of topography have virtually dictated their location. However, the large majority of these establishments date back some years for their beginnings and for many the toll of the passage of time is much in evidence. Restricted by topography, the very real danger of flooding, and the need for greater land areas, these areas have not attracted many new industries. New industrial growth has taken place in areas outside the city with no consistent pattern of development. New industries have located in the recent past to the north toward Weaverville, northwest up Bingham Road, south toward the airport, and east toward Swannanoa.

In an attitude survey of selected industrial plant managers conducted by the Planning Board staff in 1969, it was generally agreed that those industries located in older areas were somewhat cramped and could not consider expansion in their present locations. Most of those located in the newer outlying areas had adequate sites with room for expansion. A significant observation from those who were considering relocation was their desire to be near an interstate highway.

There thus appears a genuine need to find better locations for industry and to attempt planned industrial districts offering all services and utilities.

The possibility of securing large tracts of land in advance and enlisting the cooperation of private and public agencies in developing such areas is being explored. A mammoth upgrading of areas bordering the rivers, now being used in many cases as the dumping place for commercial and industrial wastes, is needed.

The Utilities Systems

Instead of using the utility systems as a means of planning and controlling the location and rate of development, in the past we have responded to demands for extensions purely on the basis of revenue potential and have reduced the effectiveness of utility extensions as a positive land-use control.

The major utilities—those which are the most costly and have the most effect on the development of land are water and sewer. It is with these two that we will therefore be primarily concerned.

Water

Blessed with an abundance of rain-fall Asheville has little fear that its reservoir will run dry. There is plenty of water all right, but the big problem is getting it distributed to the places where it is needed. The present system is spread too thin—it is in need of major improvements in main distribution lines and many residential service lines. In addition, as pointed out by the National Bureau of Fire Underwriters, substantial improvements for the purposes of adequate fire flow are needed in a number of places.

In many residential areas to the north, south, east and west, small inadequate lines exist and under present city policy, cannot be extended since they would further compound the problem. Whereas in the past, as indicated in the first paragraph above, small lines were extended piece-meal to individual water customers based purely on the profitability of selling water, the present interim policy* will insure that no future problems are created while we are trying to solve the problems of today.

Sewer

Sewer lines in general have been laid down in the same manner as water lines. In fact, about the only sewer lines which could safely be considered adequate for today and for reasonable anticipated growth are the large interceptors recently installed by the Metropolitan Sewerage Commission. Providing for sewerage service is a special bugaboo in that an option is sometimes taken by a developer to install the cheapest system in the shortest possible time. This has meant that septic tanks have gone into areas which later became so developed that public sewerage had to be provided, thus causing a double expenditure of money.

*This policy, adopted by City Council appears as Appendix II

As we look toward tomorrow and those tomorrows to come, we see the Asheville Area breaking through the 100,000 population mark in slightly over 20 years. We see a community desperately striving to create a new "image". Economists have predicted even better times ahead—more leisure time, more people seeking recreation and amusement areas in our midst. The increasing number of "foot-loose" industries means that the Asheville area more than ever has an opportunity perhaps to become somewhat selective in enticing industry to the area.

A Voice From the Past

Let us take a look at a message from the past that is just as appropriate today in planning for tomorrow. City Planner John Nolen forwarded his report to the city government with this message February 21, 1923:

"The purpose of general city plans should not be misunderstood. While their practicability in general has been carefully tested, they are not to be regarded as final plans to be executed without additional study; nor is it expected that all of the recommendations will be carried out at one time. Some of these demand early action. Others can wait. The economy, however, to be secured by the early acquisition of land for public open spaces should not be lost sight of, and it should be remembered that the purchase of land is an investment that fully justifies the use of long term bonds.

"Asheville has the location, climate, and environment that should lead to a steady growth. Such growth, however, needs to be guided by careful planning. The city government and the people of the city are now awake not only to Asheville's resources but also her present needs, and they are resolved to meet them. The city, therefore, is ready for a far-reaching development, based upon sound planning."

Can We Really Plan?

Those involved in the planning process are optimistic enough to believe that a community does have the ability to shape its future. The logic used is that **sensible people, provided with sufficient information and the opportunity to decide will, in the long run, make the decision that will bring about the type of environment they want.** The problem sometimes has been that, in making those decisions, insufficient information was available, there was really no consensus as to which direction the community wanted to go, and no meaningful mechanism was established by which these goals can be carried out.

Let us therefore attempt, for the first time in our history, to establish first some guidelines around which we'd like to plan, build—even rebuild our city.

General Principles

As a community, Asheville accepts the responsibility of providing living conditions for all citizens which meet basic human needs and are commensurate with individual human dignity. These fundamental requirements include: decent housing; clean air and water; superior educational, recreational, and health programs; and a broad pattern of public and private social welfare services.

The people of Asheville should conserve the natural beauty and unique character of their city. Historical buildings and sites should be preserved and new construction or renovation should be in harmony with the character of the city.

To insure a stable and prosperous economic base, the city must work with private enterprise to maintain a balanced economy with diversified manufacturing, commercial, and service industries. Jobs and job training should be readily available to people of varied ages, abilities, and education.

Community pride and morale must be maintained so that all citizens accept their responsibility to the community. Broad participation in identifying and solving community problems is essential, and all citizens should be willing to contribute their full share of the effort and financing for all community services.

All future planning and development should be carried out on the assumption that Asheville is the focal center of an expanding and changing region, and that the city limits as such will have less and less significance. The city should recognize and accept a shared responsibility with neighboring communities for the economic and cultural leadership of the region.

The Development Trend

A projection of land use trends has been made for the next twenty-five year period. This is shown on the Future Land Use Trend Plan Map in the back of this report. Certain assumptions were made in rendering the picture of the Asheville Area of 1995. The primary assumption (and one which we will later question) is that things which have happened in the past will continue on about the same in the future.

It is worthwhile examining this Trend to determine if this really represents the ultimate, or if we have detected things we want changed—if we can arrest or change the trends that we don't like.

The Trend represents the results of the analysis and projections by 265 small areas into which the Asheville study area was divided. Individual estimates of projected land use were furnished the State Highway Commission in furthering the development of a revised Transportation Plan. Land use categories were: Residential (Single and Multi-Family), Commercial, Industrial, Public and Semi-Public, Streets and Rail Rights-of-Way, and Water.

In examining the Trend, these assumptions were made:

*** It is assumed that problems concerned with the financing of utilities lines will be resolved—i.e., that the economics of land development will assure continued growth.

*** It is assumed that flood problems will be solved.

A general look at this future city shows that low density residential development accounts by far for the largest proportion of developed land. The automobile is still the chief method of transportation, and the highway network is one of the principal factors influencing growth.

In order to accommodate this population of 100,000 plus, it is estimated that an additional 4400

odd acres of land would be developed. Below are some observations on the major types of land use as the projected Trend. (See Appendix III for tabulations of acres devoted to various classes.)

Residential

It was assumed that slightly more apartments would be built and that the proportion of multi-family dwellings would increase from 5% to 10%. Relatively low densities for single-family units are seen (four dwelling units per acre in the suburban areas—2.7 % in the mountainous area.)

Multi-family development was seen as medium density—10 units per acre.

Commercial

The trend shows continuation and extension of strip commercial development along major thoroughfares. Larger clusterings should take place at interstate interchanges.

The total land devoted to commercial is expected to double in size.

Industrial

The industrial classification includes manufacturing, trucking, warehousing, and mining industries.

It was assumed that small light industries would predominate in future industrial expansions.

The Trend sees the major portion of new industrial development taking place along or close to the French Broad River. Other possibilities for developing new industrial areas are shown on the map and are:

I-26 and I-40 Interchange

South of the interchange between I-26 and Brevard Road

South of Sand Hill Road & State Highway NC 112
West of US 74 between the Swannanoa River and proposed I-40

The Trend anticipates scattered development of both small and large industries.

Public and Semi-Public

This category of land includes schools, churches, governmental offices, hospitals, parks, golf courses, non-profit organizations and cultural facilities.

As seen from the map, this represents a broad and mixed type of land use, each with different characteristics. These areas are naturally spread over the entire area, following no particular pattern or plan. In the short time since the publication of our report on future land use, some major events have occurred which affect this plan: The decision of the County Commissioners to develop a large scale recreation complex in the Leicester area with the following decision by the city to forego plans for the construction of the new golf course in the northwest part of the area. A further change in projections of this type of land use comes about from the retrenchment of the Veterans Administration Hospital area. The VA has released a great portion of their land for other purposes—not fully decided at this writing.

Street and Rail Right-of-Way

This category of land use accounted for about 25% of all developed land at the time of our survey. Only a small increase is expected, the assumption being that as new land area is developed, streets and street rights-of-way would account for about 25% of the new area. As for rail and rail rights-of-way, it was assumed that virtually no extensions would be made.

Alternative Plans

Having glimpsed a view of our city as it might look, perhaps we should determine if this picture jibes with our thinking about what we **want** to see.

In a number of particulars, things could be better. Let's start with the shape of the city.

Instead of expanding outward into the nooks and crannies, we need to use our land better closer in. Starting in the center, the Central Business District needs "tightening up." It's too big—too spread out to be efficient. It needs a tight Central Business District loop with convenient parking strategically located. Too much emphasis in the past has been made on the **business** aspects of the central core area. Downtown can be an interesting and exciting place to be. It can be a most convenient place to live. The redevelopment of the Asheville-Biltmore Hotel into apartments for the elderly should be followed by additional high-rise housing close to the heart of the city. The facts of life show that the role of downtown is changing. We must roll with the punches and begin putting into downtown those things which will make it a more enjoyable place to visit.

We must strive to encourage the redevelopment of downtown for cultural, governmental, office, retail and residential uses.

The Trend showed vast areas devoted to low density residential uses. This is expensive to develop,

and places too many demands upon already inadequate street and utilities systems. Asheville will have to go to higher density housing. Condominium apartments undoubtedly will reach this area soon. They should be anticipated and their location and impact planned for.

In addition, residential development must take place in areas where services and utilities can be adequately provided. There are many areas in the City which can be used or redeveloped more effectively than in scattered locations on the fringes.

The Trend shows more and more "strip" commercial development. Higher standards now under study will call for clustering of many types of land uses, so that practices which waste land and compound traffic congestion will be discouraged.

Although industrial development is seen as expanding along the river, it seems likely that any worthwhile industry will seek a location elsewhere. Present efforts to develop a large planned industrial park should be encouraged. The pollution of the two rivers by present industries should be pin-pointed and appropriate actions taken.

In every way possible, ways and means should be taken to relocate much of existing industry along the river. Flood plain regulations, including zoning and subdivision regulations, need to be adopted and stringently enforced. A large portion of the river area

lends itself well to redevelopment as a charming riverfront park.

The transportation system of the future city must rely heavily on the use of mass transit. Distances in the urban area are not great—by automobile in light traffic, it's only about 20 minutes from the extreme north to the extreme south part of the area. And yet, a bus trip from the East Riverside area to Beaver Lake consumes at least 45 minutes, considering the transfer and waiting time. The development of the mass transit system must be closely coordinated with the development of job opportunities. If an industrial park is to be located in South Buncombe (where there already are a number of major plants) certainly a mass transit system must provide easy commuting to and from this area for the low-income residents of the central city.

The opportunity will be presented in the months to come to consider alternative plans. In cooperation with the State Highway Commission, various thoroughfare schemes will be tested and citizen reaction obtained. The Department of Transportation and the State Highway Commission expect to obtain much-needed "feed-back" on plans and programs. The final location for construction of new highways will be based on the local community's acceptance of the plan, and not purely on engineering or economic considerations.

GOALS AND PROJECTS

In preparing comprehensive plans, statements of goals toward which we are striving must be made. Goals define what is intended to be accomplished, what we look towards in the preparation of a comprehensive plan. With the setting of general goals, next come specific courses of action to be followed in striving for these goals—the projects around which we can develop programs.

What do the people of Asheville want their city to be? A sedate, residential community with a campus atmosphere? A tourist mecca where neon signs compete with ferris wheels and honky-tonks? Or should Asheville be a well-balanced, diversified community with well-planned industrial districts, delightful visitor attractions and pleasant residential areas. Which is it to be?

...if a well-balanced city, it must have a composite of numerous elements—elements which appeal to the several “publics” who visit, use, work or live in the city.

Thus, the image will be made up of factors which are attractive to industry: good, clean, water; schools and training facilities, cultural and recreational activities.

Certain aspects should reflect the preferences of retired people: quiet, shady streets; unhurried shopping areas; easily accessible and congenial leisure-time activities. To attract or retain the younger population, Asheville must provide outstanding educational facilities, good shopping, and a sense of excitement; it should be a place of “happenings.”

THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- Goals:** A more efficient and economical transportation system.
A high degree of coordination among all transportation forms: highways, streets, public transit, trucking, air, rail, and taxi-cabs.
- Projects:** Provide a north-south, four-lane thoroughfare with parking prohibited at all times - Merrimon - Broadway - Biltmore Avenues.
Create a loop connecting Charlotte - north to Murdock - Weaver Boulevard - Montford Avenue - North French Broad - Hilliard - Market - Valley.
Establish a Metropolitan Transportation Commission.
Combine streets, highways, parking, taxis, airports, transit and terminal facilities.
Establish Liaison Committee with State Highway Commission.
Establish zoning controls 1,000 feet both sides and at interchanges of all interstates, the Appalachian Highway, and designated scenic highways.
Remove bus stops on approach legs of all signalized intersections.
Include in Capital Improvements Program yearly proposals for repaving major traffic carriers.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Goals:** An adequate variety of goods and services
A choice of sites suitable for a variety of outlets.
Functional, safe, and attractive facilities.
Minimum conflict with other metropolitan activities.
Effective use and development of old centers.
- Projects:** Control and limit the extension of “strip” commercial development along major traffic arteries.
Encourage the establishment of planned business districts of optimum size in which commercial activities are grouped.
Establish and enforce development standards for commercial uses.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Goals:** A diversified industrial base.
An adequate supply of suitable industrial sites.
Efficient and harmonious groupings of industries.
- Projects:** Establish a Buncombe County Industrial Development Authority.
Develop Cane Creek and the old airport into large Planned Industrial Districts.
Develop and enforce performance standards (noise, odor, heat, pollution, etc.).
Establish minimum size for industrial sites and development standards.
Renew inefficient and obsolete industrial and mixed industrial-commercial areas that have a high industrial potential.

THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

- Goals:** A more compact Central Business District.
A more attractive area.
A center of culture, finance, government and trade.
- Projects:** Organize the Central Business District interests.
Determine the market potential of the Central Business District.
Develop a Central Business District plan.
Try out the "Town Lift" program.
Encourage relocation of incompatible uses.

HOUSING

- Goals:** Safe and sanitary housing for all area residents.
A broad choice of housing types.
Housing choices within neighborhoods.
Identity and individuality in housing.
Convenience to facilities and activities.
Safe, healthful, and blight-free residences and neighborhoods.
- Projects:** Encourage design and planning innovations in both housing structures and land development.
Revise Zoning Ordinance to encourage higher densities.
Develop "Half-Way Housing" using mobile homes for immediate, temporary relocation needs.
Convert Hillcrest Apartments to housing for the elderly.
Encourage development of condominium apartments.

UTILITIES

- Goals:** Establish minimum standards for service to all populated areas.
Upgrade deficient water and sewer systems.
- Projects:** Update the maps that show the location and sizes of water and sewer lines.
Use public utilities — water and sewer and services to influence location, intensity, and timing of land development.
Establish fair method for sharing costs of utility extensions between the developer and the utility system.
Encourage utility companies and developers to bury distribution systems.
Combine districts, systems, and commissions into an overall Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Commission.
Produce a joint City-County Plan of Improvement.
Determine levels of service and costs.
Reduce overlapping functions.
Extend costs to areas benefitted.
Develop policies on annexation.
Establish working committee to carry out land development standards and policies: County Health Department, State Highway Division Engineer, County Sewer Department, City Water Engineer, City Building Inspector and Planning Staff.

PLANNING AND DOING

- Goals:** A good living and working environment for all citizens.
Planning incorporated into decision-making activities—
A "continuing planning process."
- Projects:** Anticipate and show on maps where and how much land will be needed for new development — shopping centers, subdivisions, industrial development . . . and in turn, what types of public facilities and services will be required to serve that development.
Modernize planning legislation, organization, and administration.
Establish forums with the governing bodies for resolution of goals, plans, and projects.
Use Citizens Advisory Committee as sounding board for planning proposals.
Simplify communications—streamline reporting methods.
Establish a Regional Planning Process.
Establish an Information System.
Initiate Capital Budgeting for City and County governments.
Revise City Subdivision Ordinance.
Adopt County-wide Subdivision Ordinance.

V. CARRYING OUT THE PLANS

A review of past plans and recommendations made indicates that something more is needed in Asheville. Those pretty pictures John Nolen painted in 1922 of the future city at that time were not followed up with **plan implementation**. In the months — and perhaps years — to come we must insure that we use all measures we can to carry out our plans. A variety of means is suggested.

Policies for Future Growth

Policies: simply defined — systematic and consistent ways of doing things. Missing in Asheville is a set of written policies concerning many areas of activities of the two governments. It is not intended here to detail these areas, but rather to concentrate on several which have had the most serious impact on the physical development of the city.

The description of inadequacies in the physical plant of the community (most notably the water, sewerage, and street systems) has suggested that revision, or perhaps, initial establishment, of certain

basic policies is needed. Simply stated, the city tax-payer has assumed too large a proportion of the costs of developing new land areas. In an attempt to maximize profits, minimum and below standard utilities and streets have been installed. The result? Costly up-keep or replacement.

The city should adopt a policy of refusing to provide any of its services to land areas which are planned to be developed below the minimums set forth in the zoning ordinance and the subdivision regulations.

In an attempt to prevent substandard development as well as arrive at a more equitable method of financing water and sewer extensions, the City Council in late 1969 adopted an interim policy which, among other things, limits extension of water lines which would be inadequate for future growth and fire protection. This policy is good as far as it goes. The cooperation of other public agencies must be forthcoming, however. At the same time that the

city is attempting to set some minimum standards for development, other agencies, which are concerned only with their particular functional activity, are sometimes assisting in the development of substandard neighborhoods.

The Metropolitan Planning Board should delineate on a map those particular areas in which utility systems are so substandard that extensions cannot possibly be made. A clearinghouse of public agencies concerned with construction and land development should be established, composed of the representatives of the County Health Department, the State Highway Division Engineer, the County Sewer Department, the City Water Engineer, the Building Inspector, the Electrical Inspector. It should be a policy of this group to refuse to issue the appropriate permits of each individual agency represented where such anticipated development falls below the stated minimums.

Legal Tools: Zoning, Subdivision Regulations, Etc.

The analysis of residential and commercial areas in the Asheville Urban Area documented an enormous number of specific land use problems. A wide number of recommendations were made for correcting existing situations and for preventing new problems from arising. Unfortunately, very few of these recommendations have seen the light of day and, today we have substantially the same problems. Why? Despite the establishment of protective codes and ordinances regarding land use, street layouts, etc., they have not served their purpose.

The Zoning Ordinance itself was cited as a major culprit in fostering (and festering) land use problems. Its major deficiencies:

- No statements of **intent** in the establishment of zoning districts.

- Poor or no buffering between conflicting land uses.

- Poor and ineffective sign control provisions.

- Weak provisions for eliminating nonconforming uses.

- Excess number of zoning districts, with no clear cut pattern of distinctions between districts.

- No modern and innovative provisions such as Planned Unit Developments.

- Cumbersome amendment provisions.

- Insufficient provision for varying housing design, in single-family districts, such as intermixtures of townhouses, condominiums, etc.

- The Zoning Ordinance fails to consider the unusual nature and impact of certain land uses which should be "Conditional Uses" —subject to adequate review before issuance of building permits.

- The Zoning Map has serious deficiencies in it. It needs to harmonize with the city's plans and policies.

Major streets are zoned as "strip" commercial.

There is over-zoning of "Commercial" districts, giving little guidance over direction and rate of growth.

There is premature zoning—slum neighborhoods in proximity to commercial and industrial zones were themselves zoned commercial or industrial—the theory being that in time they would be redeveloped. The practice, however, leaves the inhabitants in a continuing debilitating environment and even allows encroachment in their neighborhood by obnoxious uses.

Zoning by reference to tax lot description is often confusing and is not used in modern zoning practice.

In addition, the method of zoning by establishing district boundary lines based on ownership patterns is fallacious.

In addition to the deficiencies in the Ordinance, land use problems continue to form by means of various practices of developers who have seemed to find loop-holes or ways of avoiding city codes and ordinances. Specifically:

1. Private roads or streets are built with substandard provisions.
2. Houses are constructed on these private streets in disregard of setback standards, yards, and parking requirements.
3. Land is being subdivided by the simple device of cutting off a lot by metes and bounds description.
4. Land is also being subdivided by drawing up plats which are filed in disregard of the subdivision ordinance.
5. Curb cuts and driveways are constructed along major thoroughfares in excess number and width.

The weaknesses in the present subdivision ordinance stem not only from the wording of the

ordinance but also from the fact that a substantial number of subdivisions manage to evade the provisions of the ordinance.

The planning staff has long wrestled with this problem and has begun a series of meetings with interested developers to come up with a more workable ordinance and also a simplified administrative procedure. The present ordinance is based on a special local act dating back to 1921. The General Assembly in 1969 removed the exemption feature of the general enabling legislation, authorizing the City to come under the provisions of the more modern act. This should be accomplished as rapidly as possible. In the meantime, the violators of the ordinance should be informed that the city will not take part in providing any of its services to those subdivisions which have not conformed to its standards. In addition, the possibilities should be investigated of arranging a clearinghouse by means of periodic round-table reviews of subdivision proposals. This team should consist of those directly involved in reviewing and processing subdivision plats. This includes representatives from the offices of the State Highway Commission District Engineer, the County Health Offices, the County Sewer Department, the City Public Works Department, the City Engineer, the County Sanitarian, the Register of Deeds, and the Planning Staff.

Another ordinance badly needed by the City should cover minimum standards for curb cuts and driveways. The State Highway Commission has a set of standards which are honored more in the breach than the observance. Their "Manual on Driveway Entrance Regulations" prescribes standards for the number, the location, and the widths of driveways bordering state highways. A ride up most any thoroughfare, Merrimon Avenue, for example, will demonstrate that these regulations are being ignored. An interesting excerpt from this manual concerning

procedural aspects of obtaining driveway permits states: "Where local zoning or subdivision ordinances exist, the developer should submit four (4) copies of the site plans to the local planning body. The local planning body, after tentative approval of the plan, should forward the plans to the District Engineer. The District Engineer will take the necessary action and inform the developer or the local planning body of the results of the investigation conducted by the Highway Commission." Ways and means will have to be found to enforce these regulations.

Special local legislation is needed from the North Carolina General Assembly to help the city carry out its plans and policies. The general authority which the city now has to exercise zoning and subdivision controls within a one-mile area from the city limits is too inflexible. Instead of an arbitrary boundary line which has no practical significance, a realistic planning area—based on present and planned growth potentials—should be established and defined on a map. Within this area, which would be the area in which growth is occurring and is likely to occur, a positive planning program coupled with the appropriate back-up legislation would effectively enable the city to control optimum growth.

In addition to the above need, the city should be given additional powers to establish "satellite" cities in the same manner as the city of Raleigh, for

example. The present annexation process proves a barrier which cannot be overcome when there are built-up areas near the city which desire annexation, but intervening land areas effectively block the attempt. The city cannot therefore afford to provide all the services and utilities to these intervening areas for some time to come. In such circumstances, as shown in Raleigh, it has worked quite satisfactorily for both the city and the satellite areas to become annexed, although not located contiguous to the city limits, as now required.

A serious conflict exists between standards for residential streets as set forth in the City's Subdivision Ordinance as it applies to the one-mile jurisdictional area beyond the city limits. The city recognizes various classes of streets and has determined that, for many minor residential streets, a 50' right-of-way is sufficient. The State Highway Commission, however, has established a minimum right-of-way of 60 feet. It can be seen that, as the city grows and as these areas developed with 60' rights-of-way are annexed and maintenance assumed by the city, the city has excess areas which it does not want and which raises the cost of maintenance. Not only from this point of view, but also the fact is that land is being wasted in excess street rights-of-way.

Inter-Governmental Cooperation

Increasingly those in government who work at the local level—i.e., in delivering services to the citizens—are being called on to coordinate their efforts one with the other. In many ways the federal government, and more lately state government, has recognized that much federal legislation has brought about a multiplicity of programs each designed in some way or other to provide assistance. Coordination of the programs was left to local efforts. The problem manifested itself by the manner in which contact—communications, if you will—**vertically** worked very well. E.g., the County Home Agent's dealings upward to the State and thence to the U. S. Department of Agriculture were excellent. "Horizontal" communication, however, was weak. On the local scene, for example, the plans for a new Farmers Home Administration-financed water system did not necessarily have to be reviewed by others concerned with land development and utilities systems.

Recent federal legislation has stressed inter-agency cooperation and coordination. This cuts across political boundary lines, brings together single-purpose authorities, municipal commissions, state operating departments, regional economic development districts.

City-County Cooperation

The "bust" in the 1920's forced the city and county to consolidate their refinancing efforts and combine the property tax functions. The successful operation of the Sinking Fund Commission and the combined Tax Department points the way for more coordinated efforts between city and county government. The joint Planning Board—originally established with a somewhat narrowly defined scope of activity—is increasingly concerned with matters which cross back and forth between governments.

Other areas of mutual interest have been—and are being—explored.

1. Joint Inspection Office

Anticipating the adoption of a County Zoning Ordinance, preliminary study is being given to the manner in which zoning could be effectively administered by one office for both the City's Ordinance and the County's. (It is acknowledged at the present time that there will be two separate ordinances. The fact is that the city has had some 20 odd years experience in working with a zoning ordinance and that the county's first effort must necessarily be with a less refined document.)

2. Combined Water-Sewer System

Present water and sewer studies underway will provide valuable information in analyzing existing problem areas and future needs. Alternative methods will be explored for providing water and sewer services on a planned basis, considering overall land development trends. The excellent financial position of the various Sanitary Districts with retirement of the old refunding debts by 1976 gives an opportunity to explore more efficient and economical methods for financing and operating a metropolitan water and sewer system.

3. Joint Information System

The possibilities of applying computer technology to the operations of city and county government are almost limitless. Operating in some areas with tools of the 1890's, the introduction of labor-saving devices with standardization of procedures and up-to-date methods portend a tremendous break-through in government operations.

4. Other Services and Facilities

Other possibilities for improvement in the provision of governmental services and facilities need to be explored. Some of the problems presented are: serious inequities in methods of financing, varying levels of service, duplications in some instances and deficiencies in other instances. For example:

The Regional Airport

Financed by the City of Asheville with federal aid, this airport is truly regional in function. With a city government committed to getting the maximum return for each city tax dollar, it is logical that alternative methods of sharing the cost of operational and capital expenditures will be explored.

Library Services

A 1965 study recommends the reorganization of the city library system and the five independent libraries in the county. Although the Asheville system renders much higher levels of service than that available in the county, the downtown library needs to be replaced and additional funds are needed to provide optimum levels of service for the community. Since the needs in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county are acute, a systematic approach is needed to arrive at equitable methods of financing and operating a good library system for all of the residents of the county.

Public Housing

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Although critical housing shortages and slum conditions persist in areas outside the city, no orderly approach has been sought to deal with this problem. The Housing Authority of the City of Asheville has followed a policy of operating within the city limits. The combined package of plans and programs designed to prevent the spread of blight and to provide decent and sanitary housing (under HUD's "Workable Program") is a program of city government and, of course, stops at the corporate boundaries. In the past, it has been traditional to consider county government as serving the rural population and that urban-type programs did not lie within county government's purview. Recent trends point in other directions, however. In this specific area of need, several choices are available:

1. The City's Housing Authority could, by joint agreement and resolution with the county, construct public housing units in the county. This practice is questionable, however, in the absence of adequate protective codes and ordinances.

2. The County itself could set up its own Housing Authority.

3. The present Housing Authority could be expanded and reorganized to become a joint city-county Authority. This choice is probably the most efficient and productive manner of attacking the problem.

New Directions in Planning — The Planning Process

Other changes are seen in the way of bringing the decision-makers and the planners closer together. The success of Councils of Government in many areas of the country shows that the problems of today need to be handled more efficiently with direct lines of communications established. Councils of government may offer this opportunity.

This trend some see as affecting the role of lay planning boards. Most of these boards were established under enabling legislation written in the thirties.

Bringing planning closer to day-to-day activities will also see the reduction of planning documents as such. In the 1950's for example, the quality of local planning programs administered through the federal government's Urban Planning Assistance Program was partly measured by the mere existence of a printed plan and accompanying reports. There is definitely a trend away from the production of plans *per se*. As planning staffs gravitate more and more toward the center of government and increasingly work behind the scenes to influence development decision-makers, their efforts will be less recordable in published reports, because much of their effort will be intangible (the provision of services, helping to solve current development problems, being in the right spot at the right time with the right information to influence critical development decisions.) The tendency in the future will be to define local planning effectiveness in deeds, not reports.

The concept of planning as a process sees it as a systematic way of going about doing things, of taking

into account the inter-actions of a number of agencies, private and public, and their functions. The recent build-up of industrial plants along Bingham Road, for example, has been made in the absence of any overall consideration as to the needs of the area. The problem of being located in an unincorporated area without adequate land use controls has been glossed over. The matter of resolving the disposition of the sewage in the area presented a problem and was certainly handled in a manner which neglected to consider future developments in the area. The expansion of other industries in this same area along side an already inadequate road is a sufficient example of the piecemeal approach to development activities in the area.

Another example of the inadequacies in the planning process at the present time is the fact that even in such basic utility needs as water and sewer we may see examples of water service being planned in certain areas by one agency and sewer services being developed by other agencies. Perhaps the most monumental example is the fact that we have a Metropolitan Sewerage Commission and as its name implies it has no function at all in relation to water.

To understand further the nature of "planning" as a **process** let's take an example of how things have worked in the absence of the process. As a residential area builds up more houses are constructed and water lines extended, inadequate water pressure and water flow soon become problems. As more tap-ons are made to the strained system, things begin to get a little more serious and much agitation takes place.

The problem may develop into a serious one connected with health and safety since there may be inadequate fire flow and so pressures begin to mount for relieving the immediate situation. One simple and obvious remedy is to attempt to extend a larger water main in order to take care of the present problem. By means of much pressure and agitation perhaps a method is found whereby funds are made available to extend such a water main and the immediate problem seems to be resolved. As time goes by it is only natural that the area would have increased traffic, and other demands for community services, facilities, and utilities. Complaints about the traffic problem might end up, in the case of the county, at the State Highway Department Division Engineer where it is discovered that their office was not consulted in the matter of the previous expansion of the water system. In other words, a single shot approach was made to a particular problem. It appeared to be solved, but the impact and effect of constructing one facility was not evaluated in the light of overall land development. Another example might be seen in the case of the need for a new bridge across the French Broad River resulting in frequent visits to Raleigh and eventual agreement for construction of the bridge. Other considerations as to the bridge's effect on existing and future development are not taken into account simply because of the inadequacies of the planning process in the Asheville-Buncombe County area.

The planning process in other words insures that all aspects of community development are considered. The titles of some of our reports indicate

the things which must be taken into consideration:

- The Population and the Economy
- The Existing Pattern of Land Use
- The Thoroughfare System
- The Water and Sewer System
- The Community Facilities Plan
- The Park and Recreation Plan
- The Public Improvement Program
- The Capital Financing Budget

The tail begins to wag the dog when we permit single shot approaches such as going off on a tangent spending great amounts of money on water main expansions and then expecting all other phases of community development to follow the plans of the water engineers. To compare a community with home life, the undertaking of a Master Plan for water and sewer in the absence of consideration of other planning elements might be considered somewhat similar to a family hiring an architect to design a house without first knowing how much money the family expects to spend on the house.

Toward Regional Planning

Almost every type of study made in this area in the past ten years on the subject of planning and development stresses the regional approach to development problems. In governmental planning circles, it is archaic to think in terms of one government with one problem exclusive to its jurisdiction. The highways criss-cross county and municipal boundary lines—the pollution from the west is no respecter of city ordinances and city limits—the water from Cane Creek in Buncombe crosses the Henderson County line, drains into the French Broad and then comes back through Buncombe again. Here are some specific areas in which inter-city, city-county, and inter-county officials and agency heads have worked jointly in recent months:

- Industrial Park Development
- Water and Sewer Planning and Programming
- Air Pollution
- Health Planning
- Education Facilities
- Flood Control Prevention

It has been recognized that each problem seems to call for participation by functioning agencies in their respective specialties. A recent water and sewer study covering a multi-county area, for example, failed to take into consideration other aspects of development. This report has attempted to emphasize that in the planning process, major decisions on projects such as water expansion needs must be made in the framework of overall planning. Also, the proper framework is missing for joint cooperative action in projects extending beyond political boundary lines. Present governmental structure is cumbersome and lines of communication are difficult to establish.

Regardless of the form in which Regional Planning takes shape, it must be done. For some two years we have had an offer from the Tennessee Valley Authority to assist us with their staff time and with actual monies. Activities at the state level aimed toward defining logical planning districts suggest a grouping of counties in our area comprising the present Appalachian-sponsored Upper French Broad Economic Development Commission. The framework exists, therefore, for multi-county planning and development activities.

The Asheville-Buncombe County Continuing Planning Program

The planning job is never done. Our local planning board has projected its work program forward for a period of five years. This next year's program is now under review for approval by the City Council, the County Board of Commissioners and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In an attempt to make planning more meaningful to the community at large a Goals Committee was formed in the latter part of March 1970. This group of 17 men and women all active in the community, represent a cross-section of community life. This committee will review present plans and policies, attempt to establish broad goals and specific objectives, and provide needed feed-back to the Planning Board and its staff.

In such a way, we hope to go forward together in building the kind of community in which we will all enjoy living.

APPENDIX I

A List of Publications about Asheville and the Surrounding Region

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TITLE:	AUTHOR OR AGENCY;	DATE:	TITLE:	AUTHOR OR AGENCY:	DATE:
Asheville City Plan	John Nolen, City Planning Consultant	1922	Neighborhood Analysis	Barbour-Cooper & Associates	1966
Asheville Land Use Plan	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1959		Planning Consultants	
Buncombe County Land Use Plan	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1959	A Program for Renewal	Barbour-Cooper & Associates	1966
Subdivision Regulations	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1959	(A Summary of the above report)		
Master Highway Transportation Plan	Wilbur Smith and Associates,	1961	Commercial Areas Study	Barbour-Cooper & Associates	1966
	Traffic Engineering Consultant		Cultural Convention Center,	Barbour-Cooper & Associates	1967
Destination Asheville	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1961	Ballfield Stadium, Etc.		
(A generalized comprehensive			Upper French Broad River Basin:	N. C. State Planning Task Force	1967
plan for urban Asheville)			Regional Development and	Raleigh, N. C.	
Floods on French Broad and	Tennessee Valley Authority	1961	Investments		
Swannanoa Rivers — Vicinity of	Division of Water Control		Investment Guidelines for the	Hammer, Greene, Siler Associates	1967
Asheville	Planning		North Carolina Appalachian Region	Washington — Atlanta	
The Economy of Western North	Hammer and Company Associates,	1961	Housing Code	City of Asheville	1968
Carolina	Economic Consultants		Open Space Program (Preliminary)	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1968
	Atlanta, Georgia		The Image of Asheville	Tennessee Valley Authority	1968
Speaking for Buncombe '80	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1962		Knoxville, Tennessee	
(Generalized Comprehensive			Population and Economy — Asheville	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1969
Plan for Suburban Buncombe)			Transportation Area		
Economic Development of the Upper	Tennessee Valley Authority	1964	Land Capability Study	Rust Engineering Company	1969
French Broad Area, Volume I & II	Knoxville, Tennessee		Industrial Locations Study	Rust Engineering Company	1969
Community Facilities Plan	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1966	Utility Service Policies	Rust Engineering Company	1969
Asheville Metropolitan Area	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1966	Land Use Projections	Rust Engineering Company	1969
Population and Economy			Prototype Zoning Ordinance	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1969
The Land of the Sky	Metropolitan Planning Board — Staff	1966			
(Summary of the above report)					

APPENDIX II
RESOLUTION NO. 69-1

INTERIM RESOLUTION CONCERNING WATER
AND SEWER LINE EXTENSIONS FOR THE CITY
OF ASHEVILLE

WHEREAS, the City of Asheville has in the past installed water and sewer lines both within and without the corporate limits of the City of Asheville under a policy whereby the city has provided the labor for the construction of said lines and the owner or developer has assumed the cost of providing the materials therefor; and

WHEREAS, certain changes in the existing policy are desirable in an effort to remove the inequities concerning the expense which the citizens of the City of Asheville have heretofore endured, particularly in reference to the extension of water and sewer lines without the corporate limits of the City of Asheville;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY
THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE:

That the following will constitute the policy for water and sewer line extensions within and without the corporate limits of the City of Asheville.

Section 1. No water lines less than 6" permitted.

(a) No water main lines less than 6" in size shall be added to the water system of the City of Asheville when there is a possibility of water line extensions to other property, except when 6" lines and fire hydrant service are available within 1,000 feet of the property to be served.

Section 2. Extension of lines within the corporate limits.

(a) Within the corporate limits of the city, the city will extend at its expense water mains for a distance of 300 feet and sewer mains for a distance of 100 feet, per metered customer; that the cost of materials for any distance in excess of such distances shall be charged to the developer, builder, or owner, with the city providing labor for installing extensions beyond the distances indicated for its water and sewer mains.

Section 3. Extension of lines without the corporate limits.

(a) Within one mile radius in all directions of the corporate limits of the City of Asheville, the cost of water line extensions shall be shared by the city and the owner, developer or builder, with the latter paying the materials cost and the city providing the labor for extensions of the system within the one mile radius, as long as the extensions are approved by the Water Engineering Department of the City of Asheville in consultation with the planning staff of the Metropolitan Planning Board with regard to the capacity of lines to be extended, to assure the adequacy of water supply to the area proposed for extension. If the Department of Water Engineering determines that the supply of water is inadequate, no extensions will be permitted. The city will not participate in extensions of sewer system at any point beyond the corporate limits.

(b) Where there is an extension of water lines outside the one mile perimeter of the city limits the owner, developer or builder shall bear the full cost of extensions needed to serve his property. The city shall bear the cost in excess of 6" line cost estimate of any over-sized lines for future anticipated growth and reimbursement shall be made to the owner, builder or developer on a prorated basis according to cost of 6" service extensions agreed upon by the parties with a fee adequate to compensate the developer, owner or builder for his principal cost to users who may make connections to said extensions. However, such agreement to reimburse the owner, developer or builder shall not be applicable in the event said party, his successors or assigns, cannot be located or ascertained without undue hardship upon the city.

(c) For extensions of water service beyond the city limits, the extension shall be permitted only if the owner, developer or builder obtains the necessary rights-of-way and easements upon which said lines are constructed, and pays the cost of the rights-of-way,

easements and construction of the line and easements, and transfers and conveys said rights-of-way and easements and extensions of any lines to the City of Asheville. It is the intention of the city that after such conveyances have been accomplished the city will assume responsibility, ownership and control over said extensions which become a part of the water system of the City of Asheville.

(d) In all extensions beyond the corporate limits the Water Engineering Department of the City of Asheville shall designate the plans and specifications for the construction of the extensions and shall determine the adequacy, size and location of such extensions proposed.

Section 4. The administrative officials of the City of Asheville are instructed to adhere to the intent of this policy, except as it may be changed or amended in reference to potential industrial customers by City Council. It is intended that the City Council shall retain exclusive discretion over the extension policies of the City of Asheville.

I move the adoption of the foregoing resolution.

s/Barbara C. Keleher
COUNCILMAN

SECONDED BY: s/Robert P. Crouch
COUNCILMAN

Read, approved and adopted, this 20th day of November, 1969.

s/Wayne S. Montgomery, M.D.
MAYOR

APPROVED AS TO FORM: s/Margaret Simmons
CITY CLERK
s/J. M. Golding
CORPORATION COUNSEL

APPENDIX III

EXISTING (1967) AND PROJECTED POPULATION AND LAND USE FOR ASHEVILLE STUDY AREA.

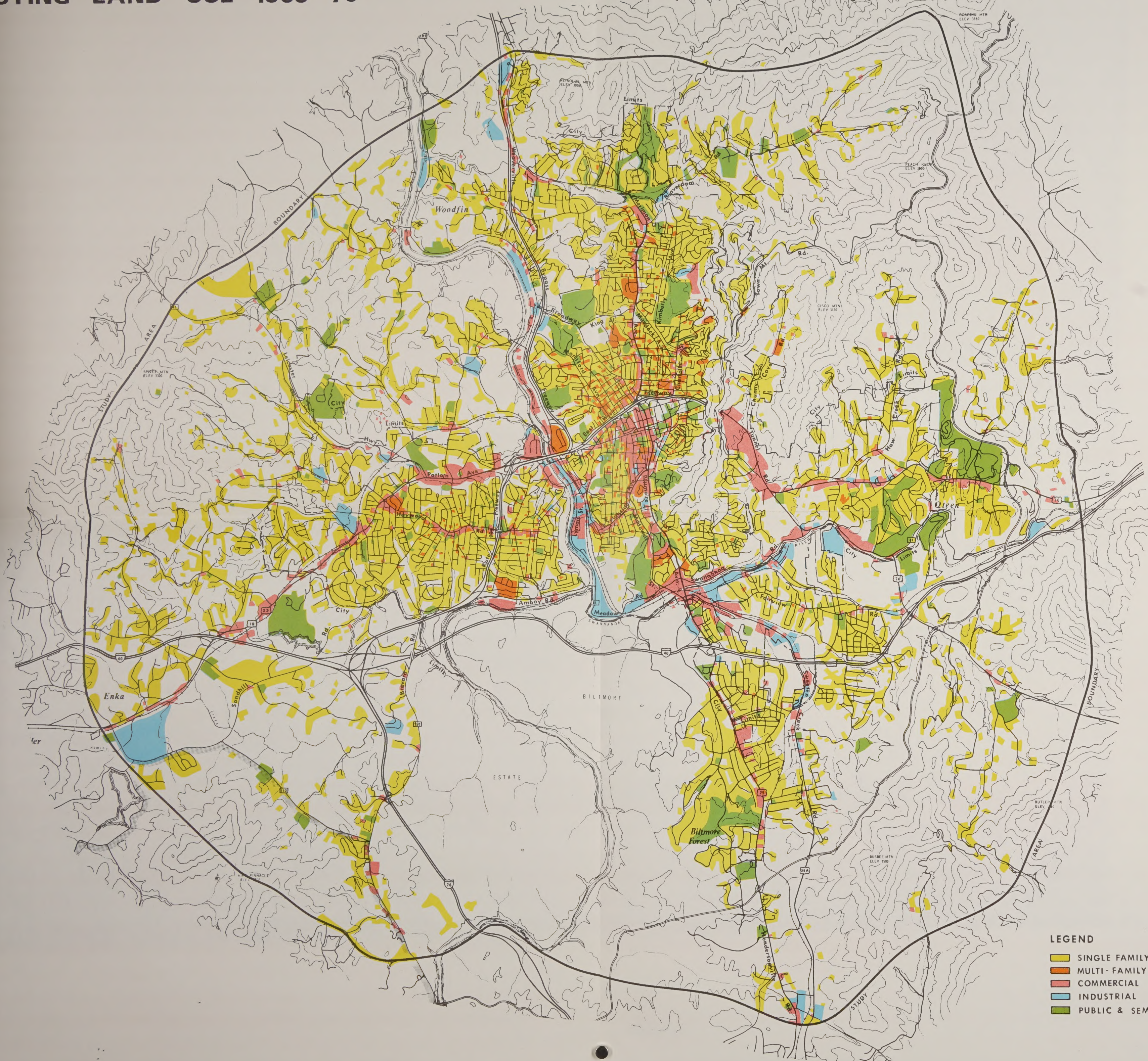
POPULATION		
	1967	1995
Total Population	78,448	104,073
EXISTING AND PROJECTED LAND USE		
	1967 Acres	1995 Acres
Residential	8,957.8	10,991.3
Single Family	8,569.8	10,359.3
Multi-Family	388.0	632.0
Commercial	799.5	1,615.5
Industrial	612.4	1,025.8
Public & Semi-Public	1,889.1	2,530.1
Street and Rail R/W	4,190.3	4,711.2
Water	497.3	497.3
 Total Developed	 16,946.4	 21,371.2
Vacant	44,916.8	40,492.0
Total	61,863.2	61,863.2

APPENDIX IV

METROPOLITAN PLANNING BOARD STUDIES PROPOSED FOR 1970-1971

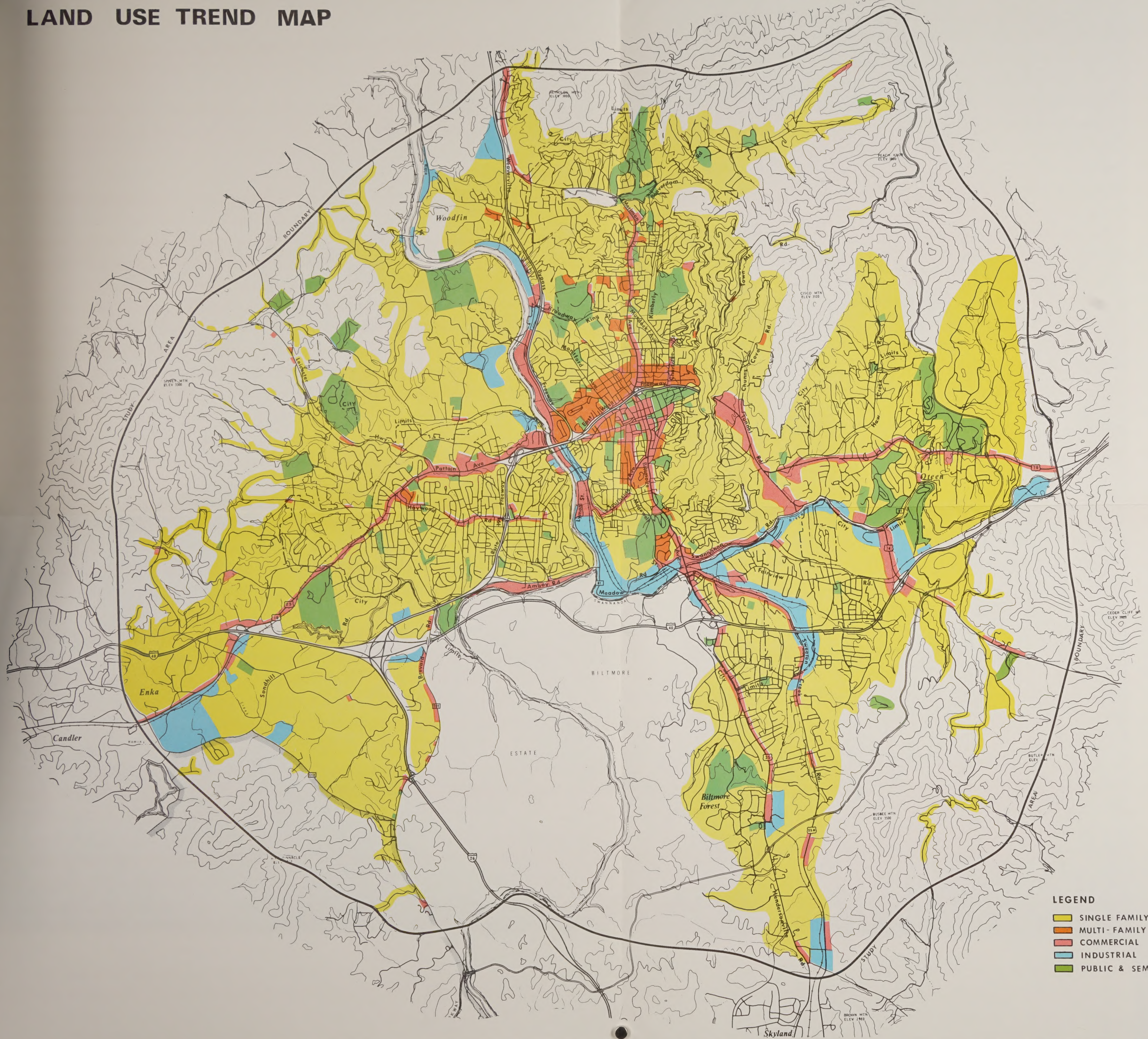
Open Space Plan	Staff
Community Facilities Plan	Consultant
Financing the Planning Program	Staff
Water and Sewer Plan	Consultant
Planning Legislation Study	Staff
Public Relations and Community Involvement Program	Staff
Housing Element	Staff
Housing and Relocation Service Center Study (Information System)	Consultant & Staff
Housing Site Study	Staff

EXISTING LAND USE 1969 - 70



- LEGEND**
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
 - MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
 - COMMERCIAL
 - INDUSTRIAL
 - PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC

LAND USE TREND MAP



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